'Revolution' in U.S. Seen Near Crisis

By Willard Clopton Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

Ed Butler calls himself a "conflict manager." Some might call him a swinging spokesman for the New Right.

Butler, a lithe 34-year-old togged out in beige corduroy jacket and suede shoes to match, flew in from Los Angeles this week to promote a movie and a book and to speak some provocative words about revolution in our time.

"There is a prejudice in this country against revolution," he began, quoting Walter Lippmann.

"But the fact is that we are having one in this country and it is not necessarily bad. A revolution can be good or ill, depending on who is making it and the ethic they employ."

Butler sees evidence of the Nation's revolutionary turmoil in such developments as the rise in street and campus violence, the upheaval in the Catholic church and what he calls the "quantum jumps" taking place in the way young people think, dress and express themselves.

The struggle is nearing a critical point, he believes, and the outcome could be either a national tragedy or a new sense of purpose among Americans.

To insure the latter, Butler urges the training of a new breed of "conflict managers" — persons steeped in psychology and mass media techniques who are able to incluence revolutionary processes so as to "minimize violence and maximize freedom."

A dropout from Loyola University in his native city of New Orleans, Butler got his professional start there by founding the Information Council of the Americas, an anti-communist news bureau.

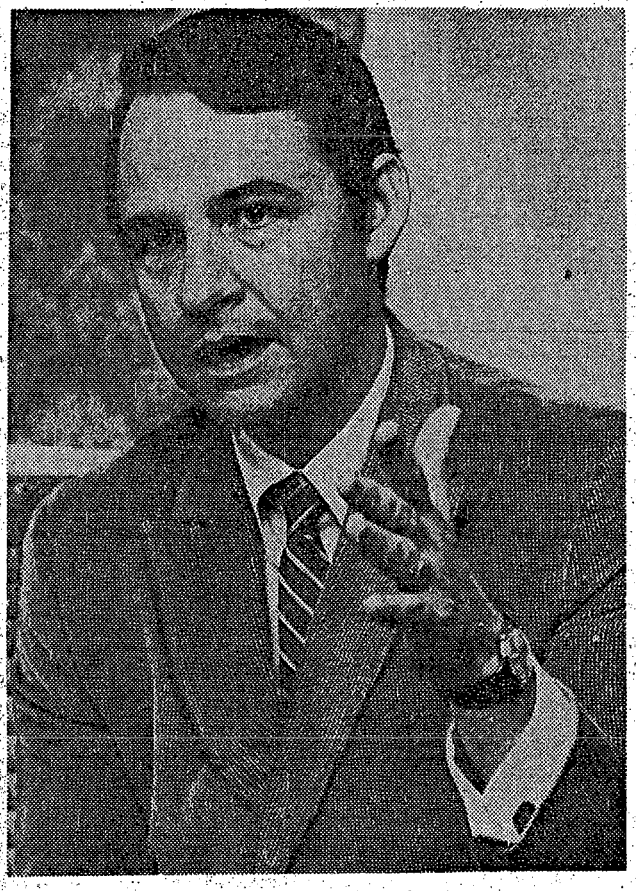
This year he became editor of a new magazine, the Westwood Village Square, published in Los Angeles and heavily subsidized by Patrick Frawley, a wealthy West Coast razor blade manufacturer well known for his support of anti-communist causes.

The Square is a breezily written, slick-paper publication that makes splashy use of color and prints stories about such subjects as communist terror in Vietnam and a profile of the "Inrhodes," a rock group made up of six young men without beards. The magazine also sells buttons and posters bearing slogans such as "Users are Losers" and "Hitler is Alive and Well in Havana."

Butler knew Lee Harvey Oswald in New Orleans and interviewed him on a radio station there 93 days before President Kennedy was shot.

He recalls the assassin as an "extremely dedicated proficient propagandist, but also in some ways a very sympathetic character. He was completely self-educated, you know, and used words like 'superfluitous' and 'coincise' instead of 'concise.'"

Butler recently produced a documentary film on Oswald, which is making the rounds of independent television stations. Although he sees no evidence that Oswald's deed was part of a conspiracy, Butler does believe Oswald was incited to act by propaganda emanating from Fidel Castro's Cuba.



By Arthur Ellis—The Washington Post

Ed Butler explains the New Right's revolution: "It is not necessarily bad . . . depending on who is making it."

Butler also has written a newly issued paperback book called "Revolution Is My Profession," in which he sets out some of his thinking.

He believes the world is likely to remain indefinitely in a state of "permanent revolution" somewhere between war and peace.

"The H-bomb and the Nuremburg trials have made a great deal of military thinking obsolete," he says. "Warfare can't be rationally contemplated. But this doesn't change human nature."

Butler believes that impulses toward tyranny and freedom fluctuate in every individual and in whole populations.

"Whenever tyranny gets the upper hand, it leads to conditions like war and poverty. Unless there are adequate checks and balances, revolution comes about as a radical and decisive escape valve," he says.

Although he firmly opposes Castro, Butler thinks a revolution "probably was neded in Cuba." He believes "one is probably needed in the United States today" to rectify such conditions as the "bum deal" given to American Negroes and the "IBM card treatment most college students get."

"Kids today feel nobody is listening to them. There's the feeling they can't get there within the system, so they step outside and knock it down," he says.

But he warns that "revolution is the most drastic operation that can be performed on the body politic." Unless there is responsible management of conflict, he said, "You can end up curing the disease by killing the patient."

Butler does not consider himself a "New Rightist."

"I'm for getting rid of all those words like left and right wing, conservative and liberal, pinko and comsymp and reactionary," he says.

"In today's world, there are just two kinds of people—those who want freedom and those who will tolerate some degree of tyranny as a means to something later on. I am for freedom and I believe the revolution can be won for freedom."